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While we believe that the end-game solution set is to establish a separate Tribal/Native Broadband Fund (TBF), it may be necessary to apply this interim step to carriers serving customers in Alaska and Hawaii.

Proposed changes to current rule language are shown in bold font and italic print. Current section headings are also shown in bold print font.

Subpart F – Universal Service Fund

GENERAL

§ 36.601 General.

(a) The term Universal Service Fund in this subpart refers only to the support for loop-related costs included in § 36.621. The term Universal Service in part 54 of this chapter refers to the comprehensive discussion of the Commission's rules implementing section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 254, which addresses universal service support for rural, insular, and high cost areas, low-income consumers, schools and libraries, and health care providers. The expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart F shall be added to interstate expenses and deducted from state expenses after expenses and taxes have been apportioned pursuant to subpart D of this part. Beginning January 1, 1998, the expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart will be administered and funded through the new universal service system discussed in part 54 of this chapter.

(b) The expense adjustment will be computed on the basis of data for a preceding calendar year which may be updated at the option of the carrier pursuant to § 36.612(a).

(c) Until June 30, 2001, the annual amount of the total nationwide expense adjustments shall consist of the amounts calculated pursuant to § 54.309 of this Chapter and the amounts calculated pursuant to this subpart F. The annual amount of the total nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this Subpart F shall not exceed the amount of the total loop cost expense adjustment for the immediately preceding calendar year, increased by a rate equal to the rate of increase in the total number of working loops during the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing. The total loop cost expense adjustment shall consist of the loop cost expense adjustments, including amounts calculated pursuant to §§ 36.612(a) and 36.631. The rate of increase in total working loops shall be based upon the difference between the number of total working loops on December 31 of the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing and the number of total working loops on December 31 of the second calendar year preceding that filing, both determined by the company's submissions pursuant to § 36.611. Beginning January 1, 2000, non-rural incumbent local exchange carriers and, eligible telecommunication carriers serving lines in the service area of non-rural incumbent local exchange carriers, shall only receive support pursuant to this Subpart F to the extent that they qualify pursuant to § 54.311 of this Chapter for interim hold-harmless support. Support amounts calculated pursuant to this subpart F but not received due to the phase down of interim hold-harmless support or the receipt of forward-looking support pursuant to § 54.311 of this Chapter shall not be redistributed to other carriers.

(d) For carriers operating in the states of Alaska and Hawaii, the changes adopted to §36.601-36.631 as of [effective date of USF reform rules] will not apply to those carriers. The version of the rules found in §36.601-36.631 prior to the USF reform will continue to apply, until such time as the Tribal/Native Broadband Fund (TBF) rules are implemented.

§ 36.602 Calculation of non-rural carrier portion of nationwide loop cost expense adjustment.

Effective July 1, 2001, for purposes of determining non-rural carrier interim hold-harmless support, pursuant to § 54.311 of this chapter, the annual amount of the total nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart F shall not exceed the amount of the total loop cost expense adjustment for the immediately preceding calendar year, increased by a rate equal to the rate of increase in the total number of working loops during the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing. The total loop cost expense adjustment shall consist of the loop costs expense adjustments, including amounts calculated pursuant to § 36.612(a) and § 36.631. The rate of increase in total working loops shall be based upon the difference between the number of total working loops on December 31 of the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing and the number of total working loops on December 31 of the second calendar year preceding that filing, both determined by the company's submissions pursuant to § 36.611. Non-rural incumbent local exchange carriers and eligible telecommunications carriers serving lines in the service area of non-rural incumbent local exchange carriers shall only receive support pursuant to this subpart F to the extent that they qualify pursuant to § 54.311 of this chapter for interim hold-harmless support. Support amounts calculated pursuant to this subpart F but not received due to the phase down of interim hold-harmless support or the receipt of forward-looking support pursuant to § 54.311 of this chapter shall not be redistributed to other carriers.

§ 36.603 Calculation of rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of nationwide loop cost expense adjustment

(a) Effective July 1, 2001, the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the annual nationwide loop cost expense adjustment will be recomputed by the fund administrator as if the indexed cap calculated pursuant to § 36.601(c) and the corporate operations expense limitation calculated pursuant to § 36.621 had not been in effect for the calendar year 2000. For the period July 1, 2001, to December 31, 2001, the annualized amount of the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart F shall not exceed the non-capped amount of the total rural incumbent local exchange carrier loop cost expense adjustment for the calendar year 2000, multiplied times one plus the Rural Growth Factor calculated pursuant to § 36.604. For the period January 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002, the annual amount of the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart F shall not exceed the non-capped amount of the total rural incumbent local exchange carrier loop cost expense adjustment for calendar year 2000, multiplied times one plus the Rural Growth Factor for 2001, which then shall be multiplied times one plus the Rural Growth Factor for 2002. Beginning January 1, 2003, the annual amount of the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to this subpart F shall not exceed the amount of the total rural incumbent local exchange carrier loop cost expense adjustment for

the immediately preceding calendar year, multiplied times one plus the Rural Growth Factor calculated pursuant to § 36.604.

(b) The annual rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the nationwide loop cost expense adjustment shall be reduced to reflect the transfer of rural incumbent local exchange carrier access lines that are eligible for expense adjustments pursuant to § 36.631. The reduction shall equal the amount of the § 36.631 expense adjustment available to the transferred access lines at the time of the transfer and shall be effective in the next calendar quarter after the access lines are transferred.

§ 36.603 Calculation of rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of nationwide loop cost. (Cont'd)

(c) Safety net additive support calculated pursuant to § 36.605, and transferred high-cost support and safety valve support calculated pursuant to § 54.305 of this chapter shall not be included in the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the annual nationwide loop cost expense adjustment.

§ 36.604 Calculation of the rural growth factor.

The Rural Growth Factor (RGF) is equal to the sum of the annual percentage change in the United States Department of Commerce's Gross Domestic Product–Chained Price Index (GPD–CPI) plus the percentage change in the total number of rural incumbent local exchange carrier working loops during the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing submitted pursuant to § 36.611. The percentage change in total rural incumbent local exchange carrier working loops shall be based upon the difference between the total number of rural incumbent local exchange carrier working loops on December 31 of the calendar year preceding the July 31st filing and the total number of rural incumbent local exchange carrier working loops on December 31 of the second calendar year preceding that filing, both determined by the company's submissions pursuant to § 36.611. Loops acquired by rural incumbent local exchange carriers shall not be included in the RGF calculation.

§ 36.605 Calculation of Safety net additive.

(a) *"Safety net additive support."* A rural incumbent local exchange carrier shall receive safety net additive support if it satisfies the conditions set forth in paragraph (c) of this section. Safety net additive support is support available to rural telephone companies, as conditioned in paragraph (c) of this section, in addition to support calculated pursuant to § 36.631. Safety net additive support shall not be available to rural telephone companies for exchange(s) that are subject to § 54.305 of this chapter.

(b) *Calculation of safety net additive support:* Safety net additive support is equal to the amount of capped support calculated pursuant to this subpart F in the qualifying year minus the amount of support in the year prior to qualifying for support subtracted from the difference between the uncapped expense adjustment for the study area in the qualifying year minus the uncapped expense adjustment in the year prior to qualifying for support as shown in the following equation: Safety net additive support = (Uncapped support in the qualifying year – Uncapped support in the base year) – (Capped support in the qualifying year – Amount of support received in the base year).

(c) *Operation of safety net additive support:*

(1) In any year in which the total carrier loop cost expense adjustment is limited by the provisions of § 36.603 a rural incumbent local exchange carrier shall receive safety net additive support as calculated in paragraph (b) of this section, if in any study area, the rural incumbent local exchange carrier realizes growth in end of period Telecommunications Plant in Service (TPIS), as prescribed in § 32.2001 of this chapter, on a per loop basis, of at least 14 percent more than the study area's TPIS per loop investment at the end of the prior period.

§ 36.605 Calculation of Safety net additive. (Cont'd)

(2) If paragraph (c)(1) of this section is met, the rural incumbent local exchange carrier must notify the Administrator; failure to properly notify the Administrator of eligibility shall result in disqualification of that study area for safety net additive, requiring the rural incumbent local exchange carrier to again meet the eligibility requirements in paragraph (c)(1) of this section for that study area in a subsequent period.

(3) Upon completion of verification by the Administrator that the study area meets the stated criterion, in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) of this section, the Administrator shall:

(i) Pay to any qualifying rural telephone company, safety net additive support for the qualifying study area in accordance with the calculation set forth in paragraph (b) of this section; and

(ii) Continue to pay safety net additive support in any of the four succeeding years in which the total carrier loop expense adjustment is limited by the provisions of § 36.603. Safety net additive support in the succeeding four years shall be the lesser of:

(A) The sum of capped support and the safety net additive support received in the qualifying year; or

(B) The rural telephone company's uncapped support.

DATA COLLECTION

§ 36.611 Submission of information to the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA).

In order to allow determination of the study areas and wire centers that are entitled to an expense adjustment pursuant to § 36.631, each incumbent local exchange carrier (LEC) must provide the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) (established pursuant to Part 69 of this Chapter) with the information listed for each study area in which such incumbent LEC operates, with the exception of the information listed in paragraph (h) of this section, which must be provided for each study area and, if applicable, for each wire center, as defined in Part 54 of this Chapter, and each disaggregation zone as established pursuant to § 54.315 of this chapter. This information is to be filed with NECA by July 31st of each year. The information provided pursuant to paragraph (h) of this section must be updated pursuant to § 36.612. Rural telephone companies that acquired exchanges subsequent to May 7, 1997, and incorporated those acquired exchanges into existing study areas shall separately provide the information required by paragraphs (a) through (h) of this section for both the acquired and existing exchanges.

(a) Unseparated, *i.e.*, state and interstate, gross plant investment in Exchange Line Cable and Wire Facilities (C&WF) Subcategory 1.3 and Exchange Line Central Office (CO) Circuit Equipment Category 4.13. This amount shall be calculated as of December 31st of the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

§ 36.611 Submission of information to the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA). (Cont'd)

(b) Unseparated accumulated depreciation and noncurrent deferred federal income taxes, attributable to Exchange Line C&WF Subcategory 1.3 investment, and Exchange Line CO Circuit Equipment Category 4.13 investment. Amounts shall be calculated as of December 31st of the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing, and shall be stated separately.

(c) Unseparated depreciation expense attributable to Exchange Line C&WF Subcategory 1.3 investment, and Exchange Line CO Circuit Equipment Category 4.113 investment. This amount shall be the actual depreciation expense for the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

(d) Unseparated maintenance expense attributable to Exchange Line C&WF Subcategory 1.3 investment and Exchange Line CO Circuit Equipment Category 4.13 investment. This amount shall be the actual repair expense for the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

(e) Unseparated corporate operations expenses, operating taxes, and the benefits and rent portions of operating expenses. The amount for each of these categories of expense shall be the actual amount for that expense for the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing. The amount for each category of expense listed shall be stated separately.

(f) Unseparated gross telecommunications plant investment. This amount shall be calculated as of December 31st of the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

(g) Unseparated accumulated depreciation and noncurrent deferred federal income taxes attributable to local unseparated telecommunications plant investment. This amount shall be calculated as of December 31st of the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

(h) For rural telephone companies, as that term is defined in section 51.5 of this Chapter, the number of working loops for each study area. For non-rural telephone companies, the number of working loops for each study area and for each wire center. For universal service support purposes, working loops are defined as the number of working Exchange Line C&WF loops used jointly for exchange and message telecommunications service, including C&WF subscriber lines associated with pay telephone in C&WF Category 1, but excluding WATS closed end access and TWX service. These figures shall be calculated as of December 31st of the calendar year preceding each July 31st filing.

§ 36.612 Updating information submitted to the National Exchange Carrier Association.

(a) Any rural telephone company, as that term is defined in section 51.5 of this Chapter, may update the information submitted to the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) on July 31st pursuant to §§ 36.611(a) through 36.611(h) one or more times annually on a rolling year basis according to the schedule, except that rural telephone companies in service areas where an eligible telecommunications carrier has initiated service and has reported line count data pursuant to § 54.307(c) of this chapter must update the information submitted to NECA on July 31st pursuant to § 36.611(h) according to the schedule. Every non-rural telephone company must update the information submitted to NECA on July 31st pursuant to § 36.611(h) according to the schedule.

**§ 36.612 Updating information submitted to the National Exchange Carrier Association.
(Cont'd)**

(1) Submit data covering the last nine months of the previous calendar year and the first three months of the existing calendar year no later than September 30th of the existing year;

(2) Submit data on the last six months of the previous calendar year and the first six months of the existing year no later than December 30th of the existing year;

(3) Submit data covering the last three months of the second previous calendar year and the first nine months of the previous calendar year no later than March 30th of the existing year.

(b) [Reserved]

§ 36.613 Submission of information by the National Exchange Carrier Association.

(a) On October 1 of each year, the National Exchange Carrier Association shall file with the Commission and Administrator the information listed below. Information filed with the Commission shall be compiled from information provided to the Association by telephone companies pursuant to § 36.611.

(1) The unseparated loop cost for each study area and a nationwide-average unseparated loop cost.

(2) The annual amount of the high cost expense adjustment for each study area, and the total nationwide amount of the expense adjustment.

(3) The dollar amount and percentage of the increase in the nationwide average unseparated loop cost, as well as the dollar amount and percentage increase for each study area, for the previous 5 years, or the number of years NECA has been receiving information under § 36.611, whichever is the shorter time period.

(b) [Reserved]

CALCULATION OF LOOP COSTS FOR EXPENSE ADJUSTMENT

§ 36.621 Study area total unseparated loop cost.

(a) For the purpose of calculating the expense adjustment, the study area total unseparated loop cost equals the sum of the following:

§ 36.621 Study area total unseparated loop cost.

(1) Return component for net unseparated Exchange Line C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment and Exchange Line CO Circuit Equipment Category 4.13 investment. This amount is calculated by deducting the accumulated depreciation and noncurrent deferred Federal income taxes attributable to C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment and Exchange Line Category 4.13 circuit investment reported pursuant to § 36.611(b) from the gross investment in Exchange Line C&WF subcategory 1.3 and CO

Category 4.13 reported pursuant to § 36.611(a) to obtain the net unseparated C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment, and Category 4.13 investment. The net unseparated C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment and CO Category 4.13 investment is multiplied by the study area's authorized interstate rate of return.

(2) Depreciation expense attributable to C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment, and CO Category 4.13 investment as reported in § 36.611(c).

(3) Maintenance expense attributable to C&WF subcategory 1.3 investment, and CO Category 4.13 investment as reported in § 36.611(d).

(4) Corporate Operations Expenses, Operating Taxes and the benefits and rent portions of operating expenses, as reported in § 36.611(e) attributable to investment in CW&F Category 1.3 and COE Category 4.13. This amount is calculated by multiplying the total amount of these expenses and taxes by the ratio of the unseparated gross exchange plant investment in C&WF Category 1.3 and COE Category 4.13, as reported in § 36.611(a), to the unseparated gross telecommunications plant investment, as reported in § 36.611(f). Total Corporate Operations Expense, for purposes of calculating universal service support payments beginning July 31, 2001, shall be limited to the lesser of:

(i) The actual average monthly per-loop Corporate Operations Expense; or

(ii) A monthly per-loop amount computed according to paragraphs (a)(4)(ii)(A), (a)(4)(ii)(B), (a)(4)(ii)(C) and (a)(4)(ii)(D) of this section. To the extent that some carriers' corporate operations expenses are disallowed pursuant to these limitations, the national average unseparated cost per loop shall be adjusted accordingly.

(A) For study areas with 6,000 or fewer working loops the amount per working loop shall be $\$33.30853 - (.00246 \times \text{the number of working loops})$, or, $\$50,000 \div \text{the number of working loops}$, whichever is greater;

(B) For study areas with more than 6,000 but fewer than 18,006 working loops, the monthly amount per working loop shall be $\$3.83195 + (88,429.20 \div \text{the number of working loops})$; and

(C) For study areas with 18,006 or more working loops, the amount per working loop shall be $\$8.74472$.

(D) Beginning January 1, 2002, the monthly per-loop amount computed according to paragraphs (a)(4)(ii)(A), (a)(4)(ii)(B), and (a)(4)(ii)(C) of this section shall be adjusted each year to reflect the annual percentage change in the United States Department of Commerce's Gross Domestic Product–Chained Price Index (GDP-CPI).

§ 36.621 Study area total unseparated loop cost. (Cont'd)

(b) [Reserved]

§ 36.622 National and study area average unseparated loop costs.

(a) National Average Unseparated Loop Cost per Working Loop. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, this is equal to the sum of the Loop Costs for each study area in the country as calculated pursuant to § 36.621(a) divided by the sum of the working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for each study area in the country. The national average unseparated loop cost per working loop shall be calculated by the National Exchange Carrier Association. Effective July 1, 2001, the national average unseparated loop cost for purposes of calculating expense adjustments for rural incumbent local exchange carriers, as that term is defined in § 54.5 of this chapter, is frozen at \$240.00.

(1) The National Average Unseparated Loop Cost per Working Loop shall be recalculated by the National Exchange Carrier Association to reflect the September, December and March update filings.

(2) Each new nationwide average shall be used in determining the additional interstate expense allocation for companies which made filings by the most recent filing date.

(3) The calculation of a new national average to reflect the update filings shall not affect the amount of the additional interstate expense allocation for companies which did not make an update filing by the most recent filing date.

(b) Study Area Average Unseparated Loop Cost per Working Loop. This is equal to the unseparated loop costs for the study area as calculated pursuant to § 36.621(a) divided by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area.

(1) If a company elects to, or is required to, update the data which it has filed with the National Exchange Carrier Association as provided in § 36.612(a), the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop and the amount of its additional interstate expense allocation shall be recalculated to reflect the updated data.

(2) [Reserved]

(c) The National Average Unseparated Loop Cost per Working Loop shall be the greater of:

(1) The amount calculated pursuant to the method described in paragraph (a) of this section; or

(2) An amount calculated to produce the maximum total Universal Service Fund allowable pursuant to § 36.601(c).

§ 36.622 National and study area average unseparated loop costs. (Cont'd)

(d) [Deleted]

**CALCULATION OF EXPENSE ADJUSTMENT –
ADDITIONAL INTERSTATE EXPENSE ALLOCATION**

§ 36.631 Expense adjustment.

(a) [Reserved]:

(b) [Reserved]).

(c) Beginning January 1, 1988, for study areas reporting 200,000 or fewer working loops pursuant to § 36.611(h), the expense adjustment (additional interstate expense allocation) is equal to the sum of paragraphs (c)(1) through (2) of this section. After January 1, 2000, the expense adjustment (additional interstate expense allocation) for non-rural telephone companies serving study areas reporting 200,000 or fewer working loop pursuant to § 36.611(h) shall be calculated pursuant to § 54.309 of this Chapter or § 54.311 of this Chapter (which relies on this part), whichever is applicable.

(1) Sixty-five percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 115 percent of the national average for this cost but not greater than 150 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area;

(2) Seventy-five percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 150 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area.

(d) Beginning January 1, 1988, for study areas reporting more than 200,000 working loops pursuant to § 36.611(h), the expense adjustment (additional interstate expense allocation) is equal to the sum of paragraphs (d)(1) through (4) of this section. After January 1, 2000, the expense adjustment (additional interstate expense allocation) for non rural telephone companies serving study areas reporting more than 200,000 working loops pursuant to § 36.611(h) shall be calculated pursuant to § 54.309 of this chapter or § 54.311 of this chapter (which relies on this part), whichever is applicable.(changed 08/21/06)

(1) Ten percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 115 percent of the national average for this cost but not greater than 160 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area.

§ 36.631 Expense adjustment. (Cont'd)

(2) Thirty percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 160 percent of the national average for this cost but not greater than 200 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area;

(3) Sixty percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 200 percent of the national average for this cost but not greater than 250 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area; and

(4) Seventy-five percent of the study area average unseparated loop cost per working loop as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(b) in excess of 250 percent of the national average for this cost as calculated pursuant to § 36.622(a) multiplied by the number of working loops reported in § 36.611(h) for the study area.

(e) Beginning April 1, 1989, the expense adjustment calculated pursuant to § 36.631(c) and (d) shall be adjusted each year to reflect changes in the size of the Universal Service Fund resulting from adjustments calculated pursuant to § 36.612(a) made during the previous year. If the resulting amount exceeds the previous year's fund size, the difference will be added to the amount calculated pursuant to § 36.631(c) and (d) for the following year. If the adjustments made during the previous year result in a decrease in the size of the funding requirement, the difference will be subtracted from the amount calculated pursuant to § 36.631(c) and (d) for the following year.

§ 36.641 [Deleted]. (effective 12/11/06)

The following draft rules represent an approach that would provide a much-needed waiver of any proposed USF rule changes for carriers operating in the states of Alaska and Hawaii at the time any new rules are implemented.

While we believe that the end-game solution set is to establish a separate Tribal/Native Broadband Fund (TBF), it may be necessary to apply this interim step to carriers serving customers in Alaska and Hawaii.

Proposed changes to current rule language are shown in bold font and italic print. Current section headings are also shown in bold print font.

Subpart D – Universal Service Support for High Cost Areas

§ 54.300 *Local switching support – Tribal/Native..*

For carriers operating in the states of Alaska and Hawaii, the changes adopted to §54.301-54.305 as of [effective date of USF reform rules] will not apply to those carriers. The version of the rules found in §54.301-54.305 prior to the USF reform will continue to apply, until such time as the Tribal/Native Broadband Fund (TBF) rules are implemented.

§ 54.301 *Local switching support.*

(a) Calculation of local switching support.

(1) Beginning January 1, 1998, an incumbent local exchange carrier that has been designated an eligible telecommunications carrier and that serves a study area with 50,000 or fewer access lines shall receive support for local switching costs using the following formula: the carrier's projected annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement, calculated pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section, shall be multiplied by the local switching support factor. For purposes of this section, local switching costs shall be defined as Category 3 local switching costs under part 36 of this chapter.

(2) Local switching support factor.

(i) The local switching support factor shall be defined as the difference between the 1996 weighted interstate DEM factor, calculated pursuant to § 36.125(f) of this chapter, and the 1996 unweighted interstate DEM factor.

(ii) If the number of a study area's access lines increases such that, under § 36.125(f) of this chapter, the weighted interstate DEM factor for 1997 or any successive year would be reduced, that lower weighted interstate DEM factor shall be applied to the carrier's 1996 unweighted interstate DEM factor to derive a new local switching support factor.

(3) Beginning January 1, 1998, the sum of the unweighted interstate DEM factor, as defined in § 36.125(a)(5) of this chapter, and the local switching support factor shall not exceed 0.85. If the sum of those two factors would exceed 0.85, the local switching support factor shall be reduced to a level that would reduce the sum of the factors to 0.85.

(b) *Submission of data to the Administrator.* Each incumbent local exchange carrier that has been designated an eligible telecommunications carrier and that serves a study area with 50,000 or fewer access lines shall, for each study area, provide the Administrator with the projected total unseparated dollar amount assigned to each account listed below for the calendar year following each filing. This information must be provided to the Administrator no later than October 1 of each year. The Administrator shall use this information to calculate the projected annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section.

I

Telecommunications Plant in Service (TPIS)	Account 2001
Telecommunications Plant - Other	Accounts 2002, 2003, 2005
General Support Assets	Account 2110
Central Office Assets	Accounts 2210, 2220, 2230
Central Office - switching, Category 3 (local switching)	Account 2210, Category 3
Information Origination/Termination Assets	Account 2310
Cable and Wire Facilities Assets	Account 2410
Amortizable Tangible Assets	Account 2680
Intangibles	Account 2690

§ 54.301 Local switching support. (Cont'd)

	II	
Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) Stock		Included in Account 1410
Materials and Supplies		Account 1220.1
Cash Working Capital		Defined in 47 C.F.R. 65.820(d)
	III	
Accumulated Depreciation		Account 3100
Accumulated Amortization		Included in Accounts 2005, 2680, 2690, 3410
Net Deferred Operating Income Taxes		Accounts 4100, 4340
Network Support Expenses		Account 6110
General Support Expenses		Account 6120
Central Office Switching, Operator Systems, and Central Office Transmission Expenses		Accounts 6210, 6220, 6230
Information Origination/Termination Expenses		Account 6310
Cable and Wire Facilities Expenses		Account 6410
Other Property, Plant and Equipment Expenses		Account 6510
Network Operations Expenses		Account 6530
Access Expense		Account 6540
Depreciation and Amortization Expense		Account 6560
Marketing Expense		Account 6610
Services Expense		Account 6620
Corporate Operations Expense		Accounts 6720
Operating Taxes		Accounts 7230, 7240
Federal Investment Tax Credits		Accounts 7210
Provision for Deferred Operating Income Taxes - Net		Account 7250
Allowance for Funds Used During Construction		Included in Account 7300
Charitable Contributions		Included in Account 7300
Interest and Related Items		Account 7500
	IV	
Other Non-Current Assets		Included in Account 1410
Deferred Maintenance and Retirements		Included in Account 1438
Deferred Charges		Included in Account 1438
Other Jurisdictional Assets and Liabilities		Accounts 1500, 4370
Customer Deposits		Account 4040
Other Long-Term Liabilities		Included in Account 4300

(c) *Allocation of accounts to switching.* The Administrator shall allocate to local switching, the accounts reported pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section as prescribed in this paragraph.

(1) General Support Assets (Account 2110); Amortizable Tangible Assets (Account 2680); Intangibles (Account 2690); and General Support Expenses (Account 6120) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

$$\text{Account 2210 Category} \div 3 (\text{Account 2210} + \text{Account 2220} + \text{Account 2230} + \text{Account 2310} + \text{Account 2410}).$$

§ 54.301 Local switching support. (Cont'd)

(2) Telecommunications Plant - Other (Accounts 2002, 2003, 2005); Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) Stock (included in Account 1410); Materials and Supplies (Account 1220.1); Cash Working Capital (Sec. 65.820(d) of this chapter); Accumulated Amortization (Included in Accounts 2005, 2680, 2690, 3410); Net Deferred Operating Income Taxes (Accounts 4100, 4340); Network Support Expenses (Account 6110); Other Property, Plant and Equipment Expenses (Account 6510); Network Operations Expenses (Account 6530); Marketing Expense (Account 6610); Services Expense (Account 6620); Operating Taxes (Accounts 7230, 7240); Federal Investment Tax Credits (Accounts 7210); Provision for Deferred Operating Income Taxes - Net (Account 7250); Interest and Related Items (Account 7500); Allowance for Funds Used During Construction (Included in Account 7300); Charitable Contributions (included in Account 7300); Other Non-current Assets (included in Account 1410); Other Jurisdictional Assets and Liabilities (Accounts 1500, 4370); Customer Deposits (Account 4040); Other Long-term Liabilities (Included in Account 4300); and Deferred Maintenance and Retirements (Included in Account 1438) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

Account 2210 Category 3 Account 2001.

(3) Accumulated Depreciation for Central Office - switching (Account 3100 associated with Account 2210) and Depreciation and Amortization Expense for Central Office - switching (Account 6560 associated with Account 2210) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

Account 2210 Category 3 ÷ Account 2210.

(4) Accumulated Depreciation for General Support Assets (Account 3100 associated with Account 2110) and Depreciation and Amortization Expense for General Support Assets (Account 6560 associated with Account 2110) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

Account 2210 Category 3 ÷ Account 2001.

(5) Corporate Operations Expenses (Account 6720) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

$$\frac{[(\text{Account 2210 Category 3} (\text{Account 2210} + \text{Account 2220} + \text{Account 2230})) \times (\text{Account 6210} + \text{Account 6220} + \text{Account 6230})] + [(\text{Account 6530} + \text{Account 6610} + \text{Account 6620}) \times (\text{Account 2210 Category 3 Account 2001})]}{(\text{Account 6210} + \text{Account 6220} + \text{Account 6230} + \text{Account 6310} + \text{Account 6410} + \text{Account 6530} + \text{Account 6610} + \text{Account 6620})}$$

(6) Central Office Switching, Operator Systems, and Central Office Transmission Expenses (Accounts 6210, 6220, 6230) shall be allocated according to the following factor:

Account 2210 Category 3 ÷ (Account 2210 + Account 2220 + Account 2230).

(d) *Calculation of the projected annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement.* The Administrator shall calculate the projected annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement by summing the components listed in this paragraph.

§ 54.301 Local switching support. (Cont'd)

(1) Return on Investment attributable to COE Category 3 shall be obtained by multiplying the average projected unseparated local switching net investment by the authorized interstate rate of return. Projected unseparated local switching net investment shall be calculated as of each December 31 by deducting the accumulated reserves, deferrals and customer deposits attributable to the COE Category 3 investment from the gross investment attributable to COE Category 3. The average projected unseparated local switching net investment shall be calculated by summing the projected unseparated local switching net investment as of December 31 of the calendar year following the filing year and such investment as of December 31 of the filing year and dividing by 2.

(2) Depreciation expense attributable to COE Category 3 investment, allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

(3) All expenses, excluding depreciation expense, collected in paragraph (b) of this section, allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

(4) Federal income tax attributable to COE Category 3 shall be calculated using the following formula; the accounts listed shall be allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section:

$$[\text{Return on Investment attributable to COE Category 3} - \text{Included in Account 7300} - \text{Account 7500} - \text{Account 7210}] \times [\text{Federal Income Tax Rate} (1 - \text{Federal Income Tax Rate})].$$

(e) *True-up adjustment.*

(1) *Submission of true-up data.* Each incumbent local exchange carrier that has been designated an eligible telecommunications carrier and that serves a study area with 50,000 or fewer access lines shall, for each study area, provide the Administrator with the historical total unseparated dollar amount assigned to each account listed in paragraph (b) of this section for each calendar year no later than 12 months after the end of such calendar year.

(2) *Calculation of true-up adjustment.*

(i) The Administrator shall calculate the historical annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement for each carrier when historical data for each calendar year are submitted.

(ii) The Administrator shall calculate each carrier's local switching support payment, calculated pursuant to 54.301(a), using its historical annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement.

(iii) For each carrier receiving local switching support, the Administrator shall calculate the difference between the support payment calculated pursuant to paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of this section and its support payment calculated using its projected annual unseparated local switching revenue requirement.

(iv) The Administrator shall adjust each carrier's local switching support payment by the difference calculated in paragraph (e)(2)(iii) of this section no later than 15 months after the end of the calendar year for which historical data are submitted.

§ 54.301 Local switching support. (Cont'd)

(f) *Calculation of the local switching revenue requirement for average schedule companies.*

(1) The local switching revenue requirement for average schedule companies, as defined in § 69.605(c) of this chapter, shall be calculated in accordance with a formula approved or modified by the Commission. The Administrator shall submit to the Commission and the Wireline Competition Bureau for review and approval a formula that simulates the disbursements that would be received pursuant to this section by a company that is representative of average schedule companies. For each annual period, the Administrator shall submit the formula, any proposed revisions of such formula, or a certification that no revisions to the formula are warranted on or before December 31 of each year.

(2) The Commission delegates its authority to review, modify, and approve the formula submitted by the Administrator pursuant to this paragraph to the Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau.

§ 54.305 Sale or transfer of exchanges.

(a) The provisions of this section are not applicable to the sale or transfer of exchanges between non-rural carriers after the complete phase-down of interim hold-harmless support, pursuant to section 54.311 of this part, for the non-rural carriers subject to the transaction.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, a carrier that acquires telephone exchanges from an unaffiliated carrier shall receive universal service support for the acquired exchanges at the same per-line support levels for which those exchanges were eligible prior to the transfer of the exchanges. If the acquired exchanges are incorporated into an existing rural incumbent local exchange carrier study area, the rural incumbent local exchange carrier shall maintain the costs associated with the acquired exchanges separate from the costs associated with its pre-acquisition study area. The transferred exchanges may be eligible for safety valve support for loop related costs pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section.

(c) A carrier that has entered into a binding agreement to buy or acquire exchanges from an unaffiliated carrier prior to May 7, 1997 will receive universal service support for the newly acquired lines based upon the average cost of all of its lines, both those newly acquired and those it had prior to execution of the sales agreement.

(d) Transferred exchanges in study areas operated by rural telephone companies that are subject to the limitations on loop-related universal service support in paragraph (b) of this section may be eligible for a safety valve loop cost expense adjustment based on the difference between the rural incumbent local exchange carrier's index year expense adjustment and subsequent year loop cost expense adjustments for the acquired exchanges. Safety valve loop cost expense adjustments shall only be available to rural incumbent local exchange carriers that, in the absence of restrictions on high-cost loop support in § 54.305(b), would qualify for high-cost loop support for the acquired exchanges under § 36.631 of this chapter.

§ 54.305 Sale or transfer of exchanges. (Cont'd)

(1) For carriers that buy or acquire telephone exchanges on or after January 10, 2005 from an unaffiliated carrier, the index year expense adjustment for the acquiring carrier's first year of operation shall equal the selling carrier's loop-related expense adjustment for the transferred exchanges for the 12-month period prior to the transfer of the exchanges. At the acquiring carrier's option, the first year of operation for the transferred exchanges, for purposes of calculating safety valve support, shall commence at the beginning of either the first calendar year or the next calendar quarter following the transfer of exchanges. For the first year of operation, a loop cost expense adjustment, using the costs of the acquired exchanges submitted in accordance with §§ 36.611 and 36.612 of this chapter, shall be calculated pursuant to § 36.631 of this chapter and then compared to the index year expense adjustment. Safety valve support for the first period of operation will then be calculated pursuant to paragraph (d)(3) of this section. The index year expense adjustment for years after the first year of operation shall be determined using cost data for the first year of operation of the transferred exchanges. Such cost data for the first year of operation shall be calculated in accordance with §§ 36.611, 36.612 and 36.631 of this chapter. For each year, ending on the same calendar quarter as the first year of operation, a loop cost expense adjustment, using the loop costs of the acquired exchanges, shall be submitted and calculated pursuant to §§ 36.611, 36.612, and 36.631 of this chapter and will be compared to the index year expense adjustment. Safety valve support for the second year of operation and thereafter will then be calculated pursuant to paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(2) For carriers that bought or acquired exchanges from an unaffiliated carrier before January 10, 2005, and are not subject to the exception in paragraph (c) of this section, the index year expense adjustment for acquired exchange(s) shall be equal to the rural incumbent local exchange carrier's high-cost loop expense adjustment for the acquired exchanges calculated for the carrier's first year of operation of the acquired exchange(s). At the carrier's option, the first year of operation of the transferred exchanges shall commence at the beginning of either the first calendar year or the next calendar quarter following the transfer of exchanges. The index year expense adjustment shall be determined using cost data for the acquired exchange(s) submitted in accordance with §§ 36.611 and 36.612 of this chapter and shall be calculated in accordance with § 36.631 of this chapter. The index year expense adjustment for rural telephone companies that have operated exchanges subject to this section for more than a full year on the effective date of this paragraph shall be based on loop cost data submitted in accordance with § 36.612 of this chapter for the year ending on the nearest calendar quarter following the effective date of this paragraph. For each subsequent year, ending on the same calendar quarter as the index year, a loop cost expense adjustment, using the costs of the acquired exchanges, will be calculated pursuant to § 36.631 of this chapter and will be compared to the index year expense adjustment. Safety valve support is calculated pursuant to paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(3) Up to fifty (50) percent of any positive difference between the transferred exchanges loop cost expense adjustment and the index year expense adjustment will be designated as the transferred exchange's safety valve loop cost expense adjustment and will be available in addition to the per-line loop-related support transferred from the selling carrier to the acquiring carrier pursuant to § 54.305(b). In no event shall a

study area's safety valve loop cost expense adjustment exceed the difference between the carrier's study area loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to § 36.631 of this chapter and transferred support amounts available to the acquired exchange(s) under paragraph (b) of this section. Safety valve support shall not transfer with acquired exchanges.

§ 54.305 Sale or transfer of exchanges. (Cont'd)

(e) The sum of the safety valve loop cost expense adjustment for all eligible study areas operated by rural telephone companies shall not exceed five (5) percent of the total rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the annual nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to § 36.603 of this chapter. The five (5) percent cap on the safety valve mechanism shall be based on the lesser of the rural incumbent local exchange carrier portion of the annual nationwide loop cost expense adjustment calculated pursuant to § 36.603 of this chapter or the sum of rural incumbent local exchange carrier expense adjustments calculated pursuant to § 36.631 of this chapter. The percentage multiplier used to derive study area safety valve loop cost expense adjustments for rural telephone companies shall be the lesser of fifty (50) percent or a percentage calculated to produce the maximum total safety valve loop cost expense adjustment for all eligible study areas pursuant to this paragraph. The safety valve loop cost expense adjustment of an individual rural incumbent local exchange carrier also may be further reduced as described in paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(f) Once an acquisition is complete, the acquiring rural incumbent local exchange carrier shall provide written notice to the Administrator that it has acquired access lines that may be eligible for safety valve support. Rural telephone companies also shall provide written notice to the Administrator defining their index year for those years after the first year of operation for purposes of calculating the safety valve loop cost expense adjustment.

Subpart K – Interstate Common Line Support Mechanism for Rate of Return Carriers

§ 54.900 Calculation of Interstate Common Line Support – Tribal/Native.

For carriers operating in the states of Alaska and Hawaii, the changes adopted to §54.901-54.902 as of [effective date of USF reform rules] will not apply to those carriers. The version of the rules found in §54.901-54.902 prior to the USF reform will continue to apply, until such time as the Tribal/Native Broadband Fund (TBF) rules are implemented.

§ 54.901 Calculation of Interstate Common Line Support.

(a) Interstate Common Line Support available to a rate-of-return carrier shall equal the Common Line Revenue Requirement per Study Area as calculated in accordance with part 69 of this chapter minus:

(1) the study area revenues obtained from end user common line charges at their allowable maximum as determined by §§ 69.104(n) and 69.104(o) of this chapter;

(2) the carrier common line charge revenues to be phased out pursuant to § 69.105 of this chapter;

(3) the special access surcharge pursuant to § 69.114 of this chapter;

(4) the line port costs in excess of basic analog service pursuant to § 69.130 of this chapter; and

(5) Any Long Term Support for which the carrier is eligible or, if the carrier ceased participation in the NECA common line pool after October 11, 2001, any Long Term Support for which the carrier would have been eligible if it had not ceased its participation in the pool.

(b) The per-line Interstate Common Line Support available to a competitive eligible telecommunications carrier serving lines in a study area served by a rate-of-return carrier shall be calculated by the Administrator as follows:

(1) If the rate-of-return carrier has disaggregated the support it receives in the study area pursuant to § 54.315, the Administrator shall calculate the amount of Interstate Common Line support targeted to each disaggregation zone by the rate-of-return carrier (targeted Interstate Common Line Support). If the rate-of-return carrier has chosen not to disaggregate its support for a study area pursuant to § 54.315, then the entirety of its Interstate Common Line Support for the study area shall be considered targeted Interstate Common Line Support for purposes of performing the calculations in this section.

(2) In each disaggregation zone or undisaggregated study area, the Administrator shall calculate the Average Interstate Common Line Support by dividing the rate-of-return carrier's targeted Interstate Common Line Support by its total lines served.

(3) The Administrator shall then calculate the Interstate Common Line Support available to the competitive eligible telecommunications carrier for each line

it serves for each customer class in a disaggregation zone or undisaggregated study area by the following formula:

(i) If the Average Interstate Common Line support is greater than \$2.70 multiplied by the number of residential and single-line business lines served by the rate-of-return carrier in the disaggregation zone or undisaggregated study area, then:

(A) Interstate Common Line Support per Multi-Line Business Line = (Average Interstate Common Line Support - \$2.70 x residential and single-line business lines served by the rate-of-return carrier) ÷ (total lines served by the rate-of-return carrier); and

§ 54.901 Calculation of Interstate Common Line Support. (Cont'd)

(B) Interstate Common Line Support per Residential and Single-Line Business Line = Interstate Common Line Support per Multi-Line Business Line + \$2.70.

(ii) If the Average Interstate Common Line Support is less than or equal to \$2.70 multiplied by residential and single-line business lines served by the rate-of-return carrier in the disaggregation zone or undisaggregated study area, but greater than \$0, then:

(A) Interstate Common Line Support per Multi-Line Business Line = \$0; and

(B) Interstate Common Line Support per Residential and Single-Line Business Line = Average Interstate Common Line Support ÷ residential and single line business lines served by the rate-of-return carrier.

(iii) If the Average Interstate Common Line support is equal to \$0, then the competitive eligible telecommunications carrier shall receive no Interstate Common Line Support for lines served in that disaggregation zone or undisaggregated study area.

§ 54.902 Calculation of Interstate Common Line Support for transferred exchanges.

(a) In the event that a rate-of-return carrier acquires exchanges from an entity that is also a rate-of-return carrier, Interstate Common Line Support for the transferred exchanges shall be distributed as follows.

(1) Each carrier may report its updated line counts to reflect the transfer in the next quarterly line count filing pursuant to § 54.903(a)(1) that applies to the period in which the transfer occurred. During a transition period from the filing of the updated line counts until the end of the funding year, the Administrator shall adjust the Interstate Common Line Support received by each carrier based on the updated line counts and the per-line Interstate Common Line Support, categorized by customer class and, if applicable, disaggregation zone, of the selling carrier. If the acquiring carrier does not file a quarterly update of its line counts, it will not receive Interstate Common Line Support for those lines during the transition period.

(2) Each carriers' projected data for the following funding year filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(3) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges.

(3) Each carriers' actual data filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(4) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges. All post-transaction Interstate Common Line Support shall be subject to true up by the Administrator pursuant to § 54.903(b)(3).

(b) In the event that a rate-of-return carrier acquires exchanges from a price cap carrier that are incorporated into one of the rate-of-return carrier's existing study areas, Interstate Common Line Support for the transferred exchanges shall be distributed as follows.

**§ 54.902 Calculation of Interstate Common Line Support for transferred exchanges.
(Cont'd)**

(1) The acquiring carrier may report its updated line counts for the study area into which the acquired lines are incorporated in the next quarterly line count filing pursuant to § 54.903(a)(1) that applies to the period in which the transfer occurred. During a transition period from the filing of the updated line counts until the end of the funding year, the Administrator shall adjust the Interstate Common Line Support received by the acquiring carrier based on the updated line counts and per-line amounts Interstate Common Line Support for the study area served by the acquiring carrier. If necessary, the Administrator shall develop an average per-line support amount to reflect various per-line amounts in multiple disaggregation zones served by the acquiring carrier. If the acquiring carrier does not file a quarterly update of its line counts, it will not receive Interstate Common Line Support for those lines during the transition period.

(2) The acquiring carrier's projected data for the following funding year filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(3) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges.

(3) The acquiring carrier's actual data filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(4) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges. All post-transaction Interstate Common Line Support shall be subject to true up by the Administrator pursuant to § 54.903(b)(3).

(c) In the event that a rate-of-return carrier acquires exchanges from a price cap carrier that are not incorporated into one of the rate-of-return carrier's existing study areas, Interstate Common Line Support for the transferred exchanges shall be distributed as follows.

(1) The acquiring rate-of-return may submit to the Administrator a projected Interstate Common Line Revenue Requirement for the acquired exchanges for the remainder of the funding year in the next quarterly report to the Administrator. The Administrator shall distribute Interstate Common Line Support pursuant to the partial year projected Interstate Common Line Revenue Requirement for the remainder of the funding year. If the acquiring carrier does not file a projected Interstate Common Line Revenue Requirement, it will not receive Interstate Common Line Support for those exchanges during the transition period.

(2) The acquiring carrier's projected data for the following funding year filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(3) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges.

(3) The acquiring carrier's actual data filed pursuant to § 54.903(a)(4) shall reflect the transfer of exchanges. All post-transaction Interstate Common Line Support shall be subject to true up by the Administrator pursuant to § 54.903(b)(3).

(d) In the event that an entity other than a rate-of-return carrier acquires exchanges from a rate-of-return carrier, per-line Interstate Common Line Support will not transfer.

(e) This section does not alter any Commission rule governing the sale or transfer of exchanges, including the definition of "study area" in Part 36.